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A case study-based investigation of experiences of people aged 65 years and over with online social interactions

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Minocha, Shailey (2015). A case study-based investigation of experiences of people aged 65 years and over with online social interactions. In: Centre for Ageing and Biographical Studies (CABS) and Centre for Policy on Ageing (CPA) Seminar series: The Representation of Older People in Ageing Research, 30 Oct 2015, The Open University, 1-11 Hawley Crescent, Camden, London, NW1 8NP.

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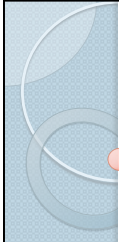


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A case study-based investigation of experiences of people aged 65 years and over with online social interactions

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30th October 2015



Conducting research with people aged over 55

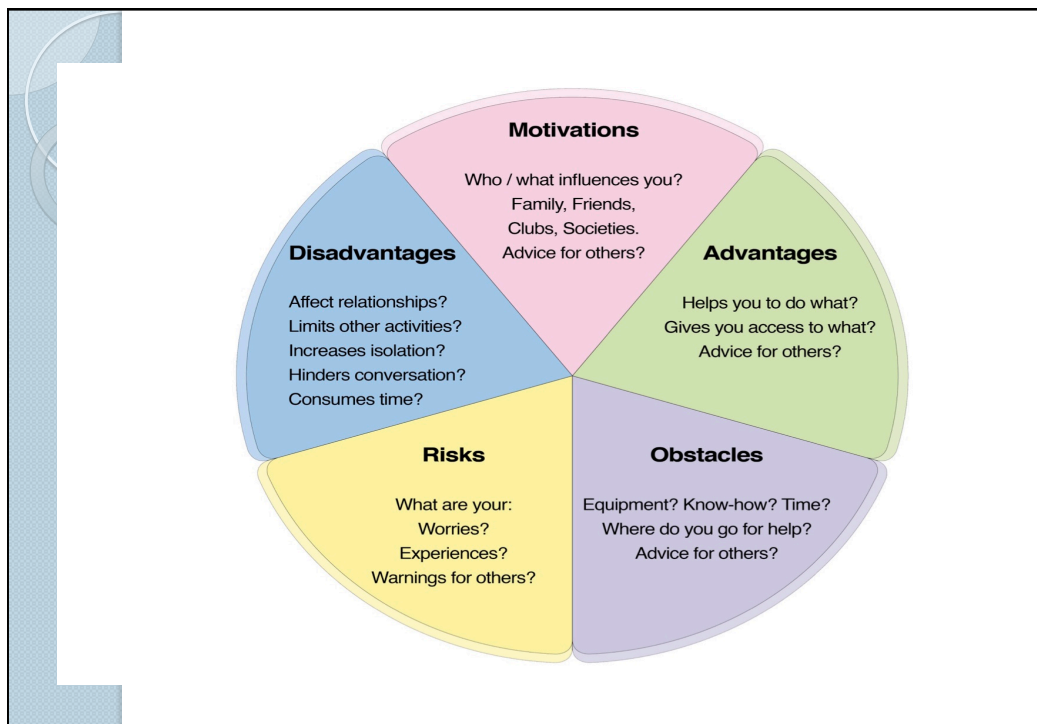
Research components

Online social interactions

**Social isolation and loneliness in
Milton Keynes**

Case study of an online photo-journal

**one-to-one interviews
small groups
workshops
online – Skype, email**



Oh my God. I have always been like a sponge, trying to learn certain things. Now I need a whole big sponge, because I want to get through to all of these I can possibly get to learn about.

It has been a great change as far as age goes. I really don't have anything to worry about. If it is a rainy day or snow, I know I can go and continue to learn. Let's do it. That is what it has done to my mind. It has opened me even more.





Not mentally old or retired

Now if there were a theatre group in Fort Worth which is where I live, I would have to figure out how to get down town. Furthermore I'd have to make arrangements, leave 45 minutes early and of course it would take me 30 minutes to get back. So I would be spending all evening, if that were the time of the meeting, either getting there or getting back or in the meeting.

It takes me 30 seconds at most to get there, more likely 10 seconds.

[Experiences of an older person in a 3D virtual world, Second Life]


need an incentive to get and stay online

A daughter said about her father: *“He tends to look up military bands [on YouTube] which is an interest that he has that he can’t access physically.”*

one-off training on using the computer and internet does not suffice



**need access to an ongoing
local technical support**



**prefer learning from one
another by sharing
knowledge and swapping
tips**



**designing government's
digital services that meet
the needs of the older users**



Disadvantages of being online

Addiction

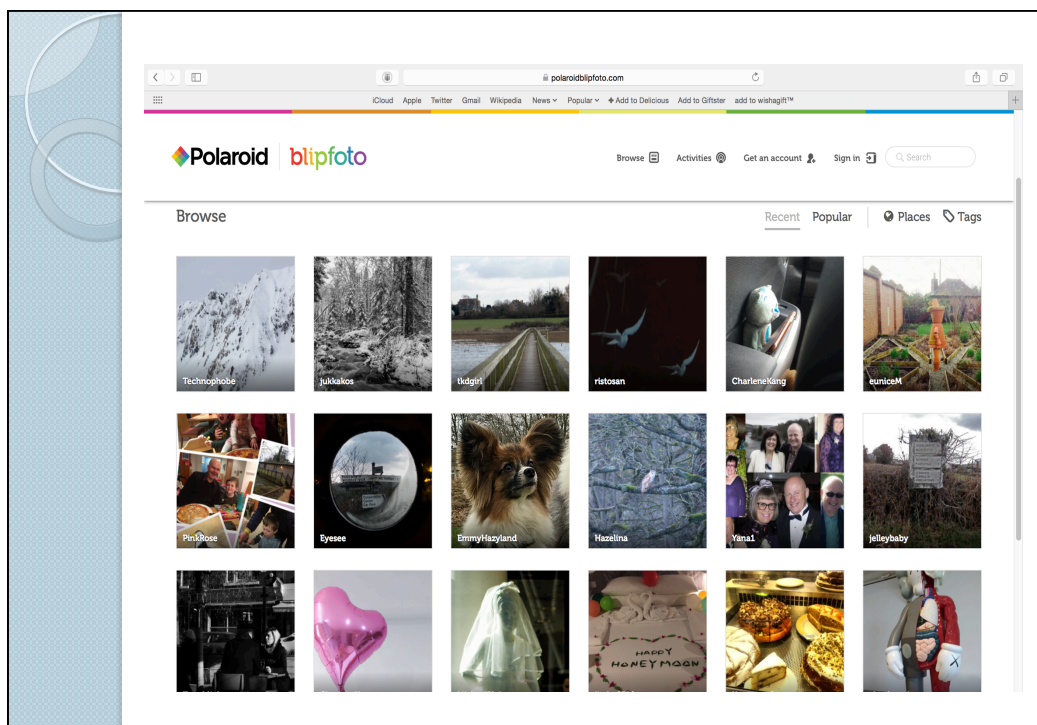
Not going out – reduced
mobility

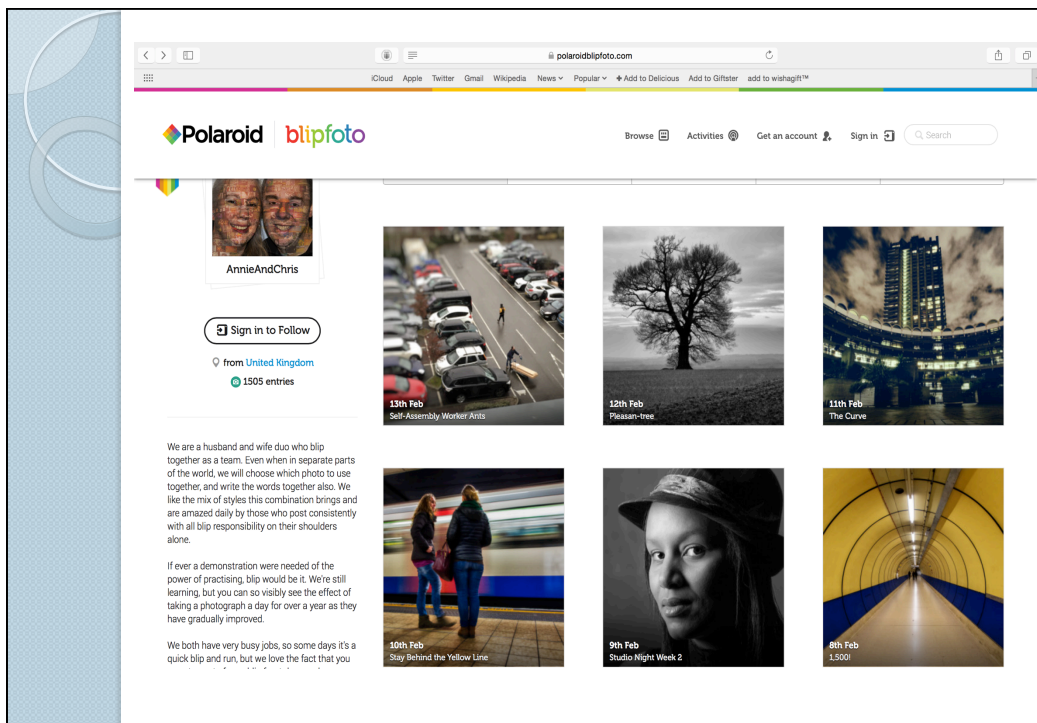
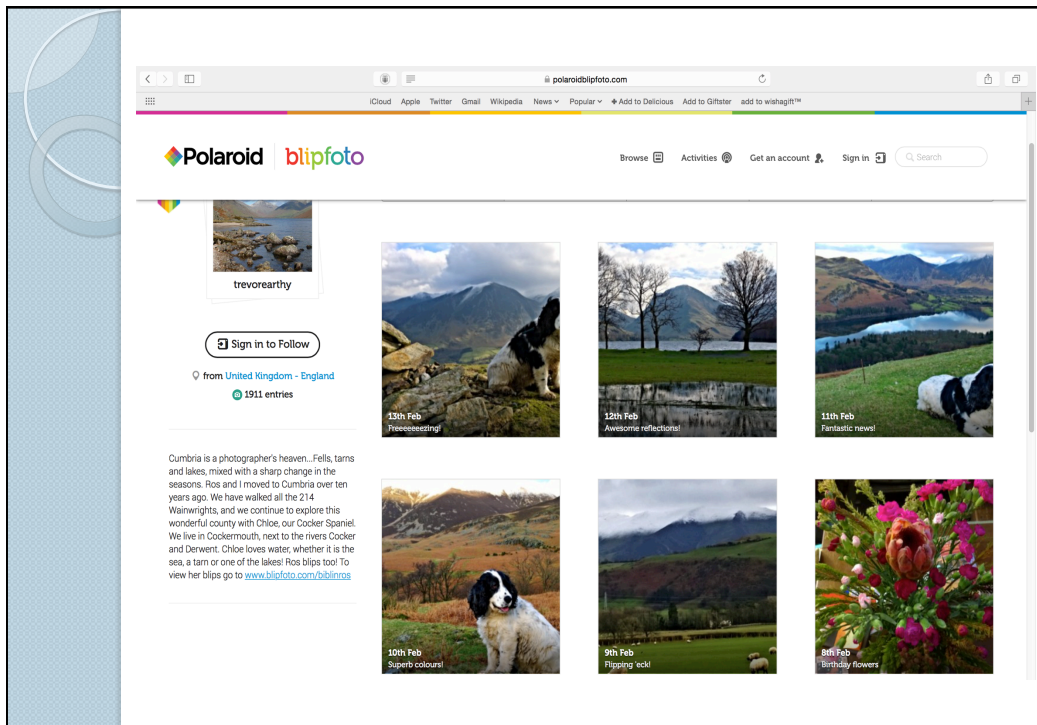
Family not visiting them often

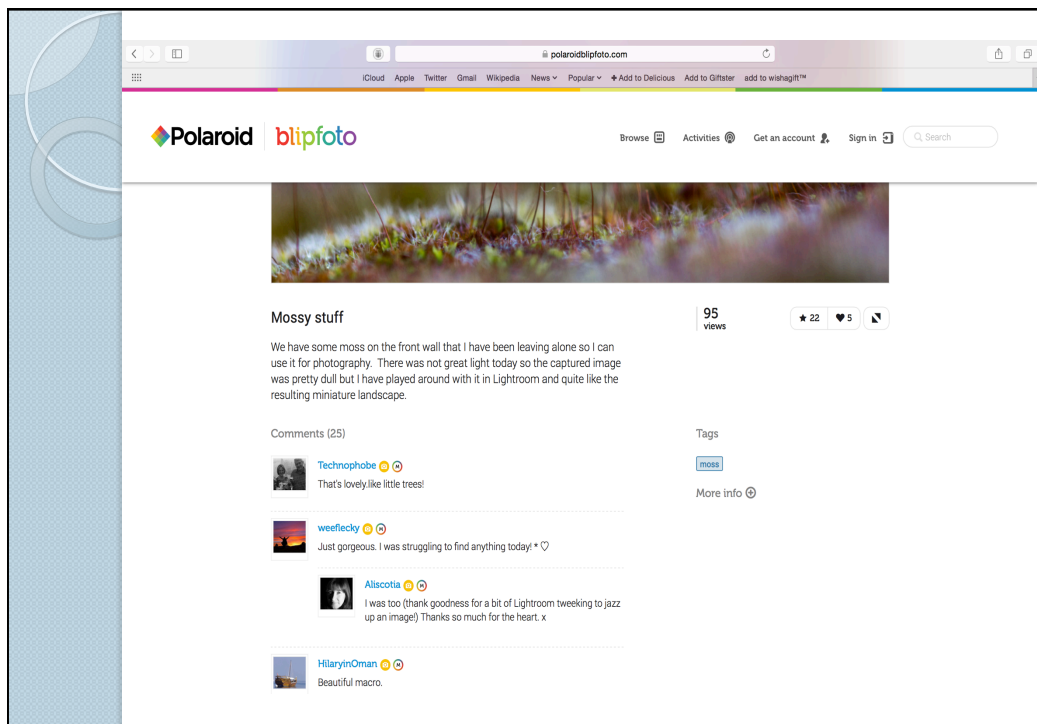
Carers not coming in

Fearing isolation

Blipfoto - *Networking through photographs worldwide* *blipfoto.com*







Advantages of interacting on Blipfoto

I wanted to keep my brain active and I also like taking photographs.

Also it opens my eyes to my surroundings and it gives me structure in my day

I find I am able to share some of my concerns and worries as well as extreme joys in a way which I am unable to do face to face with people.

Originally I liked the idea of a photo diary,

but blipfoto has fuelled my interest in photography and the regular taking of photos and the critique from other blippers is very helpful.


I have learnt such a lot from looking at what others are doing and discussing.

I have definitely become more perceptive, and I look beyond what is in front of me now.

It also gives you ideas by looking at other people's photographs, and it is a great community.

You develop new friends and become a part of their lives through their photos and commentaries.

People on here are very supportive, and tips on photography techniques are very helpful too!




interest in photography
motivation to go out
gives them a routine
community
blip-meets; go out in groups



*It makes me go out every day to find
something beautiful if possible.*

*It is wonderful when friends start
doing it too and we then have a daily
interaction that would otherwise be a
once a year Christmas card!*




The Internet, for me, is like an enormous encyclopedia. I can find just about everything about anything by using it.

I acknowledge there will always be a risk, but I think the benefits and convenience of the Internet are worth it.

I put very little personal details online and I am very selective about where I put it

Trolls, cyberscam, hijacking identity, cyber-bulling,



I don't have any concerns about being online unless advertising becomes more intrusive and knows me better than I do.

Other tools that people over 55 are using

YouTube, iPlayer

Twitter

Facebook


Blog

Flickr, Instagram

I have a Facebook account which I use to keep in touch with one of my daughters who travels quite a bit...

...but I'm not impressed with it, I find such a lot of Facebook content is shallow and inane.

The "pack instinct" that seems to come to the fore when people are bullied or trolled is so distasteful.




I use Twitter occasionally. I look for photo competitions, exhibitions etc.

I don't post on Facebook but sometimes read friends posts.

I use Facebook very irregularly. It's very useful for keeping in touch with friends who live abroad and sharing photographs.

I use Facebook and this is mainly to keep in touch with friends all over the world and particularly my younger son, who lives in Thailand. It is also good to see what my grandchildren are up to!

I use Facebook in a fairly passive way.



I cannot understand "older people" who are not interested in using it!